

What is claimed is:

1. A method of converting data messages originally formatted for transmission over a first telecommunications network for generation of a display on a display unit of a first type, such that messages can be transmitted over another telecommunications network for display by a selected display unit of a second type forming part of a server-based information display system, comprising:

replacing the address information in the original data message by address information appropriate to the selected display unit to generate an amended data message;

creating an amended data message addressed to the server of the information display system and having the amended data message as payload; and

having the server convert the amended data message into control instructions suitable to display the information content of the data message on the selected display unit.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the data message is originally formatted for transmission over a cellular telephone network for display by a cellular telephone handset.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the data message is generated by the cellular switching system in response to a message being deposited in a call answering system.

4. A method according to claim 1 further comprising:
prior to transmission of the amended data message to the server, creating an alerting data message indicative of the presence of the original data message, addressed to the server of the information display system, and carrying address information appropriate to the selected display unit, thereby causing the server to generate control instructions suitable to display an alerting message on the selected display unit; and

forwarding the amended original data message to the server in response to an instruction from a termination point associated with the selected display unit.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein:

the amended data message includes password data; and

when the server receives the amended data message, the server causes the selected display unit to indicate the presence of a data message, and display data of the amended data message only if the server receives a predetermined input from a user terminal associated with the selected display unit.

6. An apparatus for converting an original data message formatted for transmission over a first telecommunications network for generation of a display on a display unit of a first type, such that information of the data message can be transmitted over another telecommunications network for display by a selected display unit of a second type forming part of a server-based information display system, comprising:

a unit configured to receive and store an address for the selected display unit; and
a unit configured to replace address information in the original data message by address information appropriate to the selected display unit and to create a message addressed to the server of the information display system and having the amended data message as a payload.

7. An apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising:

a unit configured to create an alerting data message indicative of the presence of the original data message, addressed to the server of the information display system, and carrying address information appropriate to the selected display unit to cause the server to generate control instructions suitable to display an alerting message on the information selected display unit; and

a unit configured to forward the amended data message to the selected server in response to an instruction from a termination point associated with the selected display unit.

8. Apparatus according to claim 6 further comprising a unit configured to generate password data that causes the server to withhold at least a portion of the information of the data message.

9. A server configured for use in a first telecommunication system to receive a data message initiated in a second telecommunication system, said data message initially formatted for routing to a destination in the second telecommunication system and display on a first display type but re-routed to the server in response to identification information provided to a terminal in the first telecommunication system, said data message having been reformatted for transmission in the first telecommunication system, said server configured to further reformat the data message into control instructions suitable to display information content of the data message on a display unit of a second display type identified in the reformatted data message.

10. An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the server is further configured to cause a display unit to indicate the presence of a data message, and to respond to a predetermined input from a user terminal associated with the display unit of the second display type to display the data message, the predetermined input being a password associated with data in the data message.

11. An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the data message is originally formatted for transmission over a cellular telephone network for display by a cellular telephone handset.